CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Jessica Buck; Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson; Board Members: Kaitie Guzowski; Darby Hoppenstadt; Russ Meredith; Leslie Payment; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: M. Garmo; V. Willett

STAFF: DDA Staff: Laura Cloutier, DDA Executive Director
City Staff: Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development
Mona Freiburger, Recording Secretary

Determination of Quorum:

Quorum was met.

Reading of Vision and Mission Statement:

Mission Statement: The Mission of the Wixom DDA is to coordinate the efforts of businesses and residents to promote the growth of the downtown area for the community's benefit.

Vision Statement: The Wixom Downtown Development Authority is to provide a friendly, welcoming downtown which will enhance and honor our history while promoting cultural, business and recreational opportunity that attract businesses and residents.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Approved 1/28/2025

Public Comments:

None

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. Wixom DDA Strategic Planning Session

Strategic discussion focused on determining and prioritizing key projects for the fiscal year and beyond.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated budgetary updates revealed higher future revenue projections due to renewed operating millage and additional funding sources. Materials were provided including strategy and objectives from the past strategy session.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated he would like to discuss the key projects: Renton Redevelopment; West End Commons; Wayfinding Project.

Executive Director Cloutier outlined what the DDA could legally fund per the DDA Tiff plan.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the future year revenue projects are higher; around $200,000 more. When the last budget was approved, it projected revenue assuming that the additional operating millage was not going to be renewed. It was renewed to add approximately $200,000. In addition, there will be an additional capture from the passage of the major and local roads millage which was adopted in November, 2024. Next fiscal year, it will go from 1.13 mils to 2.5 mils; it does depend on when City Council collects the levy. This could be upwards of $160,000 or more additional capture.

The items will be prioritized: green lights, definitely doing; yellow lights, ability to; red lights are some day, love it, future dream, but not doing any time soon.

Approved 1/28/2025

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the finance director has confirmed that the plan expires at the end of fiscal year 2028-2029, June 30th.

The Renton Redevelopment, currently, there is $100,000 budgeted, and there is $80,000 which was not spent last year. There is a need for public participation on this project which would involve incentives from the City, the reduced sale price, looking at MEDC incentives considering commercial tax abatements as well as, potentially, partnering with the DDA for public portions of the project including streetscaping improvements, lamp posts, parking, and also considering storm water maintenance systems. These are items which the DDA can fund. At this point, Assistant City Manager Benson stated he did not have any additional numbers.

Wayfinding: We are on pace to do what is budgeted through the Spring, 2025.

West End Commons: Assistant City Manager Benson commented they tried to summarize everything that the DDA either put money towards such as designing the chambers for Wixom Road sidewalk, burying the power lines, replacing the sidewalk, Wixom Road landscaping, finishing light poles downtown, and expansion of hanging flower baskets and banners. Other things for consideration are VCA street maintenance, specifically, when reviewing the pavement assessment rating for the public streets in the downtown area. It has been 20 years since some of the sidewalks were installed.

Board Member Payment commented in the strategy session, walking, safety and lighting was brought up on behalf of its residents and businesses. Assistant City Manager Benson stated he thought this was appropriate, and it was important for staff to identify specific priorities such as to install lighting or streetscape amenities in the alley to the Klebba building.

Chairperson Buck commented the downtown restrooms is under future projects; then the West End Commons are budgeted projects. She indicated it was her understanding that was one in the same in which restrooms were being installed in the West End Commons area. Executive Director Cloutier indicated it is outside because the restrooms would probably be through Throne, which would be a separate contract. Assistant City Manager Benson stated they are not certain, even with the $1.2 million dollars available for this project, there would be enough funds for the total cost to install restrooms. From a staff perspective, it is planned, at a minimum, to roll in the cost of running utility lines, then address the other piece later. There is not City Council consensus on installing restrooms; there are concerns about maintenance, etc. The City owns the property, and City Council has a level of control over what happens there.

Chairperson Buck stated she was fine with Throne for restrooms; it is not like a portal potty, it looks nicer. The maintenance is handled through the contract. Mayor Beagle commented the number one complaint at the summer concerns is there are not enough portal potties. Mayor Beagle stated if Throne is used, some type of shelter could be built around it. Assistant City

Approved 1/28/2025

Manager Benson stated an important thing to remember is that grant funds cannot be used for non-permanent options because we don't own them. It is recurring expenses, there are operating expenses, and not capital expenses. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he heard Chairperson Buck's point, but he was not confident that the cost of a full public restroom could be accommodated with the $1.2 million budget. Although, downtown restrooms is a high priority.

Chairperson Buck commented the Loop has been a top priority for the DDA in years past. The playground was a great joint effort, but she thought that was stage one; that we were having stage two and a stage three.

Board Member Guzowski brought up marketing as a budget line such as digital advertising, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and to hire an outside company for this service. She would like to see a professional, social media person doing posts, a schedule and regular campaigns.

Chairperson Buck inquired if the DDA was still funding for the DPW worker to do downtown maintenance. She would like to see this as a priority. The DPW position is not working at this time. Maintenance is not done properly. Examples were given such as glass bottle broken and not cleaned up after two weeks in the downtown. Trail maintenance is not being properly maintained. Trail maintenance is still the City's responsibility as well. The lawn is supposed to be maintained, weeds are overgrown. Downtown beautification is a top priority. Clarification of snow shoveling or snow clearing on public sidewalks is an issue. A checklist, accountability and execution should be done.

Board Member Guzowski commented she has an interest in creating a project item with a budget to help business owners find assistance from Oakland County to draw up property design plans and to help with finding resources to get more information on costs, onsite preparation, etc. Assistant City Manager Benson stated it is important for the downtown to have a concept plan of what you want your downtown to look like and being able to show people. He commented he is 100% in support of this idea.

Future projects discussions were around sidewalk expansions, landscaping improvements, downtown maintenance, lighting upgrades, and pedestrian safety enhancements.

Executive Director Cloutier pulled up the GIS map of Wixom Road and the Wixom Road landscape renderings. There was a conversation to consider a budget amendment to install landscaping. Assistant City Manager Benson brought up HRC, who is the design engineer for construction in the City. He stated the City, generally, has good success with HRC but if the DDA were so inclined, they could also bid out the design engineering to develop streetscaping plans and enhancing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure along key routes. It may give the DDA a chance to, potentially, work with something different.

Approved 1/8/2025

Board members were tasked with ranking their top five priorities from the proposed projects for strategic focus. Updates and summaries will be circulated post-meeting to refine project plans and allocate resources effectively.

Information:

1) Downtown Business News/Events

- 2024: December 6th: Tree Lighting Festival, 5:00 to 10:00 p.m.
- 2024: December 11th: Candy Cane Lane, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- 2025: January 8th – February 26th: Wednesdays in Wixom
- 2025: February: Food Fight on Main Burger Battle
- 2025: May 3rd: Derby Day Races

Public Comments:

None

Executive Director's Comments:

None

Board Members' Comments:

None

Adjournment:

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

Approved 1/28/2025